

January 8, 1999

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Bob Potter requested I respond to your letter of November 6, 1998, regarding the estimated reductions of water deliveries to CVP and SWP water users resulting from environmental protection actions. I apologize for the delay in replying.

The intent of your letter is to make the point that the Bay-Delta Accord, ESA listings, and the Central Valley Improvement Act are likely to have relatively limited impacts on water supply. You attempt to do this by discrediting the estimate presented by Tom Clark at a CALFED Policy Group meeting and by comparing historical Delta exports to current demands.

I disagree with your characterization of Mr. Clark's presentation to the CALFED Policy Group. In that presentation, Mr. Clark estimated the potential average annual impact of the environmental actions for the dry period 1986-92 to be 1.3 million acre-feet, not 2.3 MAF. His estimate was based upon a delivery south of the Delta of 5 MAF. The 5 MAF represented the delivery capability during this dry period if none of the environmental protection actions were in place. In other words, the CVP and SWP were assumed to operate only under the requirements of the State Water Resources Control Board's Decision 1485. His estimate for delivery reduction compares favorably with our estimate of 1.1 MAF, as described in our letter to you dated October 7, 1998.

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Mr. Clark did mention an average delivery capability of 6 MAF under D1485 only, but did not use that value to estimate the impact of the environmental actions. No attempt was made to attribute a delivery shortfall produced by hydrologic conditions to the environmental protection actions; however, some confusion about the impact estimate did occur during the presentation. Discussion ensued to clarify the estimate but apparently with limited success. We agree with you that using 6 MAF as a benchmark in this analysis would ignore the impact of drought upon the delivery capability of the CVP and SWP.

The last table of your letter compares an average of historical Delta diversions for the period 1975-1994 to a computer model study, which uses a current demand level, to show that much more water could now be exported under the environmental protections than was done in the past. It is very true that water demand has increased since 1975. Contemplating the water supply needs of 20 years ago, however, is not helpful in managing the conditions facing us today.

The comparison is helpful in illustrating the escalation of the conflict between the needs of water users and the environment. As shown in that table, the average annual export reduction of 500,000 acre-feet for June 1986 – September 1992 would not be viewed by water users as a limited impact. This reduction would have been very significant to water users who were already receiving large delivery cut-backs during this critically dry period.

The method for calculating the values in the table is not discussed in your letter. As stated previously, the Department's estimate of the average annual water supply reduction for the environmental protection actions for the 1986-1992 period is 1.1 MAF. This value is an accurate assessment of the current impact the implementation of environmental actions would have upon Delta water supply if the hydrology of that period were to recur. It shows the environmental actions can cause a very significant reduction in water supply.

This is our second exchange of letters regarding Mr. Clark's presentation to the CALFED Policy Group. I hope it will be our last. I also hope we will minimize future discussion of the significance of historical Delta exports to the demand for water today. The Water Use Efficiency Program of CALFED's preferred alternative is the key to reducing the pressure for Delta water supplies. Our efforts would be more constructive if they were directed toward further development of that program and refinement of the preferred alternative, than continuing this discourse.

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I intend this response to be fair and constructive. I hope you view it in this light. Please feel free to call me at (916) 653-1099 if you wish to discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,

**Original Signed By**

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Office of SWP Planning

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Re: Control 1998-0604  
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